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ABSTRACT

Research studies on the affective elements of reading ability show a definite relationship between self concept and reading achievement in children. Based on these findings, this study investigated the relationship between reading achievement, self concept level, and perception of reading ability in college freshmen. Forty-six students from a language skills center in a two year college were tested on a standardized reading test, a standardized self concept scale, and an informal attitude inventory. The data were correlated using two different correlation procedures. Although there was a slight positive relationship between the male subjects' perception of their reading ability and their self concept level, the study results indicate no significant relationship between reading achievement and self concept level. These findings suggest that reading achievement is not a factor on which self concept depends at the college level. (MAI)

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A Study of the Relationship Between Self Concept and Reading

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In recent years, much attention has been given to the relationship between self-concept and school achievement. Klausmeier and Goodwin (1966) believe the pupil cannot perform at his best unless he possesses an adequate self-concept. Donald Felker (1974) points out the importance of self-concept in determining the individual's behavior in various learning situations. Central to the self-concept is a set of expectancies held by the individual which control his actions resulting in self-fulfilling prophecy. According to Felker, a relationship between positive self-concept and high academic achievement is well established. Indeed, Canfield and Wells (1976) report that cognitive learning increases when self-concept increases.

In particular relation to reading, although much research has been undertaken to determine factors important to reading achievement, most of it has been concerned with cognitive elements. Relatively few studies have dealt with the affective aspects of reading ability. However, of those studies which have considered specifically the affective variable of self-concept, many have found a relationship to reading achievement exists. Irene Athey (1970:110) observes, "In general, the research literature suggests that good readers tend to have more positive self concepts than poor readers." Wattenberg and Clifford's study of kindergarten children in the early 1960's, for example, indicated self-concept was a better predictor of reading achievement than IQ score. Youngsters with negative self-concept did not learn to read or did not read as well as those with positive self-concepts (Canfield and Wells, 1976).

A study conducted by A. J. Vilhotti (1974) was designed to determine the relationship of the self-concept to specific reading skills in seventh grade pupils. The children were divided into two groups, below-level readers and on-level readers, based on results obtained from a group reading test. While the correlations between the reading test and the self-concept measure were not all found to be significant, Vilhotti did find that the achieving readers had a higher total self-concept than the non-achieving readers.

Theresa Chang's (1974) study was designed primarily to examine the self-concept of children of ethnically different marriages as compared to the self-concept of children of ethnically similar marriages. The subjects were fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children in a Kansas school district. In analyzing the data, a significant relationship between the covariate of reading achievement scores and the total self-concept scores was found. This indicates that children with higher reading achievement tend to have higher self-concepts.

A positive relationship between reading achievement and self-concept level, suggested by much of the research, would have significance for those involved in reading education, particularly those concerned with remedial reading instruction. The existence of such a relationship would indicate a need for the consideration of self-concept variables in reading curriculum planning and program design. It would indicate a need to include in the initial stages of instruction an evaluation of the student's self-concept. Further, it would suggest a need to develop teaching strategies

which would be more humanistic, aimed toward total development of the individual.

Hypothesis

In order to gather further data on this subject, a study was conducted to determine if there was a correlation between the reading achievement and the self-concept level of a group of two-year college freshmen. It was hypothesized in null form that no correlation would be found between the reading achievement and the self-concept levels of these students.

Procedures and Sample

During the Fall semester of the academic year, 46 freshmen in a suburban two-year college were tested. These were students who reported to the Language Skills Center requesting help with reading and study skills. Some of the freshmen sought help on their own initiative; others were referred to the Center by faculty of other departments. The students were of varying ages, ranging from 18 years to 63 years, and were of diverse socio-economic status. The group consisted of 27 males and 19 females.

At the time of the initial interviews, appointments were made to administer a standardized reading test to the students to obtain a reading achievement score. Shortly thereafter, arrangements were made for the students to complete a standardized self-concept scale and an informal attitude inventory. The results of these three instruments were studied and the scores were correlated.

Definitions

Self-concept is defined as the student's perception of himself,

both as an individual and in relation to others, as determined by a standardized self-concept scale.

Reading achievement is defined as the student's level of reading ability as measured by a standardized reading test.

Specific Procedures

Most of the 46 students were tested individually; some were tested in small groups. All subjects were first given a standardized reading test, the McGraw-Hill Basic Skills System Reading Test, Form A. The standard error of measurement of the total raw score for the MHBSS Reading Test, Form A is 3.63. The coefficient of internal consistency based on the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 is 0.89 (Raygor, 1970). The test content appears to have high face validity (Black, 1972). The MHBSS Reading Test is designed for grades 11-14 and is divided into three parts: Reading Rate and Comprehension, Skimming and Scanning, and Paragraph Comprehension. The test yields seven scores: recreational reading rate, study reading rate, flexibility, retention, skimming and scanning, paragraph comprehension, and total. Maximum raw scores in the areas under consideration are as follows:

	Maximum Raw Score
Part I, Retention	20
Part II, Skimming and Scanning	30
Part III, Paragraph Comprehension	30
Total	80

Students recorded their responses on the publisher's SCOREZE answer sheets, and the tests were hand scored using the Examiner's Manual.

After each student finished the reading test, arrangements were made for the student to complete the Tennessee Self Concept Scale and the Mazurkiewicz Attitude Inventory. The Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS) is a widely used standardized measure of self-concept. Bentler (1972) reports validity correlates from .50 to .70 and retest reliabilities in the high .80's. The TSCS is self administering and consists of 100 self descriptive statements. It is appropriate for subjects age 12 or older who have at least a sixth grade reading level (Fitts, 1965). The Clinical and Research Form of the TSCS supplies 29 scores. Nine of these were selected as suitable for incorporation in this study; they are the Positive Scores or P Scores. The nine sections and maximum raw scores obtainable are:

	Maximum Raw Score
Total P Score	450
Identity	150
Self Satisfaction	150
Behavior	150
Physical Self	90
Moral-Ethical Self	90
Personal Self	90
Family Self	90
Social Self	90

The Computer Scored Edition of the TSCS was used, and the answer sheets were sent to the publisher who arranged for computer scoring and processing.

The Mazurkiewicz Attitude Inventory (MAI) is an informal

survey of an individual's perception of his reading ability and reading background (see Appendix A). The MAI consists of eleven items; the response choices to eight of these carry a numerical value ranging from 0 to 4, and the maximum total raw score is 20. Answer sheets were prepared and hand scored in accordance with instructions provided by the author (Mazurkiewicz, 1973).

For statistical analysis, raw scores obtained on the three instruments were used. Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated on an IBM 360/20 computer. Part I, Part II, Part III, and the Total Score of the MHBSS Reading Test were correlated with the nine P Scores of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. The four reading test scores were also correlated with the Mazurkiewicz Attitude Inventory total score. To illustrate, each of the scores in the first column were correlated with each of the scores in the second column.

MHBSS Retention	TSCS Total P Score
MHBSS Skimming and Scanning	TSCS Identity
MHBSS Paragraph Comprehension	TSCS Self Satisfaction
MHBSS Total Score	TSCS Behavior
	TSCS Physical Self
	TSCS Moral-Ethical Self
	TSCS Personal Self
	TSCS Family Self
	TSCS Social Self
	MAI Total Score

Finally, the Total P Score of the TSCS was correlated with the MAI Total Score. Three sets of the 41 correlations were done: first,

the scores of all subjects were used; second, the scores of only male subjects were used; and third, the scores of only female subjects were used. These calculations yielded a total of 123 coefficients of correlation.

Results

As indicated in Table 1, the mean scores on the three sec-

Table 1
MHBSS Reading Test, Form A
Means and Standard Deviations for All Subjects, for Male Subjects, and for Female Subjects

MHBSS Scores	All Subjects N=46		Male Subjects N=27		Female Subjects N=19	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Retention	11.17	2.68	11.30	2.87	11.00	2.45
Skimming and Scanning	15.48	4.67	15.78	3.62	15.05	5.93
Paragraph Comprehension	17.91	4.33	18.37	4.51	17.26	4.09
Total	44.57	9.14	45.44	8.98	43.32	9.48

tions of the MHBSS Reading Test, as well as the mean total reading score, are slightly higher for males than for females.

Table 2 shows the mean TSCS P Scores and standard deviations. In view of the finding that all mean scores on the reading test were slightly higher for males, it is interesting to note that, with the exception of the Personal Self score, all the mean scores from the self-concept measure are lower for the males than for the females.

Table 2
Tennessee Self Concept Scale P Scores
Means and Standard Deviations for All Subjects,
for Male Subjects, and for Female Subjects

TSCS P Scores	All Subjects N=46		Male Subjects N=27		Female Subjects N=19	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Total P Score	344.83	30.83	338.89	30.05	353.26	30.72
Identity	125.20	11.36	123.48	10.81	127.63	11.96
Self Satisfaction	109.13	14.81	108.30	16.22	110.32	12.87
Behavior	110.50	12.03	107.11	11.94	115.32	10.70
Physical Self	71.22	8.64	70.70	9.92	71.95	6.60
Moral-Ethical Self	70.04	7.63	67.52	6.74	73.63	7.54
Personal Self	65.28	7.59	65.37	6.52	65.16	9.09
Family Self	69.63	8.36	67.85	8.47	72.16	7.72
Social Self	68.65	7.58	67.44	7.22	70.37	7.94

As illustrated in Table 3, the mean score of the sample on the

Table 3
Mazurkiewicz Attitude Inventory
Means and Standard Deviations for All Subjects,
for Male Subjects, and for Female Subjects

	All Subjects N=46		Male Subjects N=27		Female Subjects N=19	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
MAI Total Score	12.30	2.91	11.52	3.27	13.42	1.87

Mazurkiewicz Attitude Inventory is also lower for male subjects than for female subjects.

The coefficients of correlation between the MHBSS Reading Test scores and the TSCS P Scores are given in Table 4 for all subjects, in Table 5 for the male subjects, and in Table 6 for the female subjects. In Table 4, a slight negative relationship

Table 4
Coefficients of Correlation
Between the TSCS P Scores and the MHBSS Reading Test Scores
for All Subjects (N=46)

	MHBSS Reading Test, Form A Scores			
TSCS P Scores	Retention	Skimming and Scanning	Paragraph Comprehension	Total
Total P	-.0195	-.0291	-.0139	-.0272
Identity	-.2379*	-.0395	-.1519	-.1618
Self Satisfaction	.1793	.0139	.0272	.0725
Behavior	-.0462	-.0542	.0742	-.0061
Physical Self	-.1131	-.0219	-.1355	-.1085
Moral-Ethical Self	.0170	-.1622	.0546	-.0519
Personal Self	.0139	.0174	-.0256	.0008
Family Self	.0903	.0137	.0212	.0435
Social Self	-.0812	.0375	.0451	.0167

*significant at .056 level

is indicated between the TSCS Identity score and the MHBSS Retention score. Table 5 also shows a slight negative relationship between these two variables for males. The relationship between

Identity and Retention is not significant for females, however.

Table 5
Coefficients of Correlation
Between the TSCS P Scores and the MHBSS Reading Test Scores
for Male Subjects (N=27)

	MHBSS Reading Test, Form A Scores			
TSCS P Scores	Retention	Skimming and Scanning	Paragraph Comprehension	Total
Total P	-.0085	.1369	.1397	.1227
Identity	-.3199*	.0539	-.0614	-.1113
Self Satisfaction	.2635	.1420	.1036	.1934
Behavior	-.0898	.1029	.2665	.1467
Physical Self	-.0901	-.0276	-.0998	-.0901
Moral-Ethical Self	.1451	.1894	.2872	.2669
Personal Self	.0248	.3036	.0868	.1739
Family Self	.0256	-.0576	.1153	.0429
Social Self	-.0995	.2246	.2369	.1778

*significant at .052 level

The coefficients of correlation obtained using only the scores of the male subjects as noted in Table 5 suggest slight positive relationships between Retention and the Self Satisfaction score; between Skimming and Scanning and the TSCS Personal Self and Social Self scores; between Paragraph Comprehension and the scores for Behavior, Moral-Ethical Self, and Social Self; and between Total Reading and the Moral-Ethical Self score.

As illustrated in Table 6, a low negative relationship exists

Table 6
Coefficients of Correlation
Between the TSCS P Scores and the MHBSS Reading Test Scores
for Female Subjects (N=19)

	MHBSS Reading Test, Form A Scores			
TSCS P Scores	Retention	Skimming and Scanning	Paragraph Comprehension	Total
Total P	-.0044	-.1401	-.1759	-.1648
Identity	-.1024	-.0906	-.2351	-.1847
Self Satisfaction	.0141	-.1145	-.0987	-.1107
Behavior	.0848	-.1632	-.1238	-.1337
Physical Self	-.1614	-.0056	-.1988	-.1311
Moral-Ethical Self	-.1112	-.4106*	-.1262	-.3402
Personal Self	.0	-.1650	-.1594	-.1721
Family Self	.2615	.1272	-.0471	.1269
Social Self	-.0314	-.0819	-.1672	-.1316

*significant at .04 level

between the females' scores on Skimming and Scanning and Moral-Ethical Self. A low negative relationship between the females' Total Reading scores and Moral-Ethical Self scores is also suggested. Another slight negative relationship between Paragraph Comprehension and Identity also is shown on Table 6. A slight positive relationship between Retention and Family Self score is indicated for the female subjects. All other correlations calculated between the MHBSS Reading Test scores and the TSCS P Scores for this study are negligible.

Correlation coefficients between the Mazurkiewicz Attitude

Inventory total scores and the MHBSS Reading Test scores are provided in Table 7. As shown, low negative relationships exist be-

Table 7
Coefficients of Correlation
Between the Mazurkiewicz Attitude Inventory Scores
and the MHBSS Reading Test Scores for All Subjects,
for Male Subjects, and for Female Subjects

	MHBSS Reading Test, Form A Scores			
MAI Total Score	Retention	Skimming and Scanning	Paragraph Comprehension	Total
All Subjects (N=46)	.1412	-.1630	.1414	.0251
Male Subjects (N=27)	.1920	.0101	.2705	.2012
Female Subjects (N=19)	.1094	-.4391*	-.0008	-.2468

*significant at .03 level

tween the female subjects' MAI scores and their MHBSS Skimming and Scanning score and Total Reading score. Slight positive relationships are suggested between the male subjects' MAI scores and their MHBSS scores for Paragraph Comprehension and for Total Reading. Other coefficients of correlation in this table are negligible.

Table 8 presents the correlation coefficients found between the TSCS Total P Scores and the MAI Total Scores. Low positive relationships are shown for all subjects and for male subjects. However, a negligible relationship exists between these two variables for the female subjects.

Table 8
Coefficients of Correlation
Between the TSCS Total P Score and the
Mazurkiewicz Attitude Inventory Total Score

All Subjects (N=46)	Male Subjects (N=27)	Female Subjects (N=19)
.2812*	.3102**	.0367

*significant at .029 level
**significant at .058 level

Conclusions

The null hypothesis was supported since no significant relationship between the reading achievement and the self-concept level of this group of college students was found. This may have been due in part to the ages of the students involved in the study. Although much of the research in this area reports finding significant positive correlations between reading achievement and components of the self-concept, most of these studies have involved younger subjects and sample groups with homogeneity of age. In general, the results of this study suggest that reading achievement is not one of the factors upon which self-concept is dependent at this level of schooling. It is also possible that the difficulty of the reading task involved in the completion of the self-report type measure of self-concept may have affected the results obtained on that measure.

It appears there may be a positive relationship between the male subjects' perception of their reading ability and their self-concept level. It would seem further study should be conducted using the Tennessee Self Concept Scale and the Mazurkiewicz Attitude Inventory to determine whether a relationship exists between the variables measured by these two instruments.

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Appendix A

MAZURKIEWICZ ATTITUDE INVENTORY

Name_____ Date_____

Circle answers

1. Do you remember how you learned to read? yes no
2. Did you learn to read before entering school? yes no
3. Do you like to read? yes no
4. How well do you think you read now? Circle one of the following:

   Excellent Above average Average Below average Poor

5. To what do you owe your present reading ability? Circle one in each of the following:

   a. An excellent beginning A good beginning A poor beginning

   b. Good teacher Average teacher Poor teacher

   c. Small class Average class Overcrowded class

   d. No problems at home Some problems at home A lot of problems at home

   e. Excellent adjustment to school Good adjustment to school Poor adjustment to school

   f. A logical beginning A confused beginning An illogical beginning

   g. Other (Please state your reasons.)

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. How much do you currently read?

   A great deal A lot Some Very little Not at all

Appendix B

Raw Data

Subject Number	Sex	TSCS P Scores									MAI Score	MHBSS Reading Test Scores			
		Total P	Identity	Self Satisfaction	Behavior	Physical Self	Moral-Ethical Self	Personal Self	Family Self	Social Self	MAI	Retention Skimming and Scanning		Paragraph Comprehension	Total Reading
1	M	335	110	112	113	69	66	67	64	69	11	17	26	29	72
2	M	348	129	105	114	76	70	65	72	65	16	10	18	19	47
3	F	357	126	107	124	79	78	67	64	69	16	10	05	19	34
4	M	286	100	89	97	51	65	54	60	56	11	12	09	20	41
5	F	336	118	103	115	67	66	63	70	70	15	10	19	17	46
6	F	334	115	112	107	64	69	60	82	59	14	16	23	21	60
7	M	319	131	85	103	69	55	61	64	70	6	04	10	10	24
8	F	348	129	97	122	76	61	65	75	71	12	11	24	19	54
9	M	327	123	108	96	84	61	57	62	63	13	11	16	22	49
10	M	294	112	95	87	57	65	59	58	55	17	12	13	20	45
11	F	352	135	100	117	74	71	63	73	71	11	11	09	16	36
12	M	365	135	109	121	71	77	70	74	73	12	13	17	22	52
13	M	333	120	114	99	63	69	64	72	65	8	09	16	19	44
14	M	357	130	119	108	75	74	75	59	74	11	11	21	16	48
15	M	360	140	107	113	83	71	65	62	79	9	12	16	17	45
16	F	338	138	92	108	79	72	54	63	70	16	13	15	15	43
17	F	362	131	115	116	75	74	69	74	70	9	08	19	16	43
18	M	358	121	140	97	70	70	66	77	75	10	14	17	21	52
19	F	383	139	123	121	79	81	72	75	76	11	13	23	17	53
20	M	367	133	114	120	78	69	68	82	70	13	15	18	21	54

		TSCS P Scores									MAI Score	MHBSS Reading Test Scores			
21	F	352	135	111	106	64	82	62	69	75	14	12	14	26	52
22	M	285	108	87	90	48	63	57	55	62	14	12	20	19	51
23	M	356	137	100	119	74	70	65	77	70	10	10	18	21	49
24	M	345	123	117	105	70	65	72	66	72	14	12	14	19	45
25	F	316	120	100	96	69	60	57	61	69	12	09	19	17	45
26	M	329	126	92	111	75	65	53	69	67	12	10	10	16	36
27	F	393	138	125	130	80	80	74	78	81	13	08	14	13	35
28	F	344	124	107	113	63	72	64	74	71	13	11	17	12	40
29	M	337	126	100	111	67	68	67	68	67	12	13	17	20	50
30	M	338	120	107	111	75	67	67	69	60	13	10	16	17	43
31	M	333	130	101	102	63	67	67	66	70	12	14	18	22	54
32	M	287	113	78	96	52	54	59	52	70	4	08	18	17	43
33	M	350	102	142	106	80	69	69	68	64	14	15	13	17	45
34	M	359	129	117	113	71	70	69	85	64	11	12	13	13	38
35	M	359	126	124	109	71	78	67	70	73	15	12	16	15	43
36	M	322	117	115	90	78	62	69	64	49	5	11	16	10	37
37	M	315	120	93	102	71	58	60	61	65	8	13	12	19	44
38	F	395	136	133	126	68	85	82	85	75	15	13	05	17	35
39	F	340	120	116	104	71	74	61	73	61	14	09	17	19	45
40	F	395	137	124	134	81	75	77	81	81	14	15	20	25	60
41	M	422	141	137	144	86	86	83	85	82	15	08	15	26	49
42	F	335	113	107	115	69	64	64	68	70	14	12	07	16	35
43	F	379	132	122	125	73	78	72	78	78	13	11	13	14	38
44	F	381	144	120	117	77	86	71	74	73	16	06	09	09	24
45	F	272	95	82	95	59	71	41	54	47	13	11	14	20	45
46	M	364	132	117	115	82	69	70	71	72	15	05	13	09	27